

BOOK REVIEWS

The Year Book of Dermatology. 1967-1968 Series. Edited by ALFRED W. KOPF and RAFAEL ANDRADE. 1968. Pp. 528, 80 figs, index. Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago. (98s.)

In this book of over 500 pages there is a section totalling 12 pages entitled Venereal Diseases, but which actually deals only with syphilis. In this section ten articles are abstracted, the majority relating mainly to serological tests. One of the abstracts concerns a study of the cerebrospinal fluid findings in patients treated with arsenic and bismuth and can hardly fit in with the declared aim of the Year Books "to make available in detailed abstract form the working essence of the cream of international medico-scientific literature". Useful editorial comments are made after some of the abstracts and three of the abstracts are of articles by Lawton Smith and his co-workers. Occasional abstracts in other sections of the book concern venereal diseases and there are a few abstracts of articles on penicillin sensitivity.

The reviewer is not really qualified to comment on the sections on dermatology which comprise most of the book but they seem to be comprehensive and well-illustrated and are often followed by detailed editorial comments. As the title implies this Year Book is really for dermatologists and does not provide enough coverage of venereal diseases to warrant the attention of venereologists.

P. RODIN.

Manual of Tests for Syphilis 1969. Venereal Disease Branch of the National Communicable Disease Centre, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service Publication No. 411. Pp. 81. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. (\$3.)

The reliability of a serological test depends on its precise execution by a defined method which is followed exactly. Previous editions of this Manual might have been subtitled "The Serologist's Mrs. Beeton" because the techniques of a wide variety of approved tests were set out in great detail. The latest edition reflects the changing American trend in the serological testing for syphilis; four tests only are described: the absorbed fluorescent treponemal antibody, rapid plasma reagin card, unheated serum reagin, and VDRL slide tests. No complement-fixation method is given except in a list of references of other approved methods. The interpretation of the results of serological tests is not covered.

The handbook contains additional information of use to laboratory workers on the preparation of control sera, the control of reagents, the collection and processing of specimens, and instructions for darkground microscopy. The loose-leaf format makes it easy to use at the bench and it will be found a useful addition to the laboratory library.

A. E. WILKINSON.